8: Bojkoff K-4, 5 (no date) 1946 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

nicus and Galileo who opened for us the celestial world. We have at ths time the invention of the art of printing which helped the spread of ideas by books. Here is the age of most gifted masters of speech, beauty and marble, like Petrarch and Boccacio, Ariosto and Tasso, Camoens and Servantes, of Rabelais and Montaigne, of Shakespeare, Michel-Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rafael and Tician. This is the period of great philosophers like Bacon, Giordano Bruno etc. etc... Bulgaria was unable to benefit by all these miracles of rich material, intellectual, spiritual and esthetic culture... At this same time, our half illiterate monks the only representatives of our intellectual life in this remote dark age, contemporaries of Ariosto and Tasso, of Shakespeare and Servantes, of Rafael and Tician, devoted their lives to the painstaking and tedious work of copying the lives of saints or of painting ikons, which betryed the complete conventionality and frigidity of Byzantine art!"

But neither the Turkish political, nor the Greek ecclesiastical slavery were in a position to suppress the spirit of the Bulgarian nation. It was encouraged by the enlightened groups of artizans, merchants and clergymen. A bright spark flashed all of a sudden in this dark period. This spark was the Slavic Bulgarian history of a Bulgarian monk of Macedonian origin called Paissi Hilendarski[1]). This was a hand written manuscript of 1762, which told the Bulgarian people of their glorious past, of their Kings and Patriarchs. The manuscript was called by the common people „The Book of Kings" and was copied and distributed widely in the Bulgarian lands. The plea of this Bulgarian monk to his people was „Oh Bulgarians, get to know your origin and your language". This was a forward call for the hard struggle to obtain schools and churches, enlightement, civilization and freedom of conscience; a struggle against anything that was Greek. The hatred, accumulated for centuries past — already 1083 years old — broke out with new force. This was the Bulgarian Renaissance.

„The Bulgarian Renaissance, as a process of development, has something in common with the Renaissance of Westren Europe:

[1]) A monk of the Hilendar Monastery, Mont Alhos.

000 seek to read it and copy it and be thou content, that with it thou canst save thy brother."

These remarks of the Presbyter Kozma are striking and at the same time prophetic, since he predicted here the role which books would play in Bulgaria, just as he also foresaw that eight centuries later, his people would be awakened from the spiritual lethargy of five hundred years of the Turkish yoke, or as the Bulgarian poet Vazov said, "that there will be an end of history and they will become a nation", by the books of an inspired patriot. These books passed from hand to hand in manuscript copies to play in Bulgaria the role of the life-giving elixir which aroused the tsar's daughter from the magic sleep which an evil spirit had cast upon her.

175 814 The book which the Bulgarian regards as the corner-stone of his present liberty and which is reflected in all modern Bulgarian literature is the "History of the Slav Bulgarians" by Paisi of Hilendar, a monk of Mount Athos.

In the eighteenth century the Bulgarian people had lost nearly all national self-confidence as a result of the Turkish yoke and the propaganda of the Pan-Hellenic idea by the Greek clergy and they seemed on the point of disappearing. Then Paisi, as the first of a series of clerical and lay writers who supported the feeble study of Bulgarian letters under the Turkish yoke, felt the significance which a knowledge of the past might have for the continued existence of his people and the importance to them of an understanding of the bases of its national culture. In 1762 he commenced a manuscript "History" (there were then no printing presses in Bulgaria) to remind his contemporaries that despite the oppression and

the contempt of the Turks and Greeks, they did not need to be ashamed of their own traditions. In the past the Bulgarians had had their own empire and had received tribute from the wise Greeks and they had had the most progressive tsars and patriarchs of all the Slavonic peoples and they had been among the first peoples to accept the Christian faith, which they had later handed on with a rich literature to the other Slavs.

With its poetic inspiration and its ardent love for his country, the History of Paisi appeared as a torch to kindle the lowly and undeveloped national consciousness of Bulgaria. It set it ablaze and thus caused the surprising advance of the Bulgarian people. In one century they turned from an amorphous mass to one of the strongest nationalities of the Balkans. They raised their level of culture, and developed their art, science and literature.

It goes without saying that the History of Paisi could not have worked this miracle, if it had not found a fertile soil in the souls of the Bulgarian people, and more than that, if the soil had not been cultivated by a long series of enthusiastic imitators of Paisi. Between 1800 and 1850 these writers, without stopping, first in manuscripts and later in printed books, continued to arouse the national consciousness of the Bulgarians and to spread enlightenment in their native land. The aims of these men were purely practical. The definite object of Sofrony Vratchanski, of Neofit Bozveli, of Neofit Rilski in their works which are almost always of a didactic character, was to help their people, to educate them and to lead them on the path of proper development. Yet so strong and so inspired was the love that these men had for their

538 people that without their endeavor, their works became
814 works of art and formed a stage in the development of
186 Bulgarian literature and the Bulgarian literary language. This gradually evolved under the guidance of the democratic spirit of the authors from the dead Church language which had predominated in the work of Paisi, until it approximated the Bulgarian colloquial dialects on which the modern language is based.

538 Not a little credit for the formation and crystalization
186 of the Bulgarian literary language and the development of modern Bulgarian literature must be given to the writers who walked in the steps of Paisi and his school and who were also public spirited men. This last circumstance explains the fact that the list of the most prominent authors includes the names of those Bulgarians who in the epoch preceding the political liberation of Bulgaria, the period between 1840 and 1875, took the leading and most self-sacrificing part in the cultural struggle for their country, for its spiritual awakening and its ecclesiastical independence, who fought in the revolting bands of various heroes, who worked inside the country in various revolutionary committees or with the Central Committee in Bucharest (Rumania was already free), and who thus tried in every way to secure the liberation of their country. Thus, whether we consider the men who appealed for aid in the struggles for ecclesiastical and national independence or list the writers or the leaders in any popular movement, we always come upon the names of Rakovski, Lyuben Karavelov, Drumev, and above all Khristo Botev.

The character of Sava Rakovski (1821-1867) is especially interesting and original in this group. He worked